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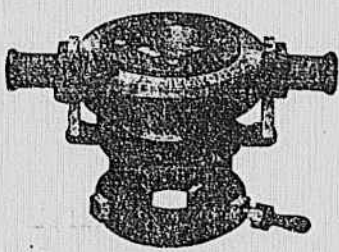


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REAL ESTATE AND BUILDING NEWS

(Continued From First Page.)

record the deeds. Think of a State tax on one deed alone for \$60,000, as is the case now with some mining properties in this and adjoining States, and for which they are contesting; and also another case pending in Carroll county of almost equal magnitude, which will shortly be tested. I fear, however, that the law is against the people in both of these cases and the parties will have to continue to pay this merciless, unnecessary and unjustifiable tax.

How Test Case Was Made.
Mr. Brown is a conservative man, and not given to strong language, except when fired by enthusiasm or earnestness, or chafing under an apparent imposition. On being informed that he was suspected of having inspired the Rountree-Saville suit, he replied that doubtless this conclusion was reached from the fact that Mr. Rountree purchased the property that was conveyed by the deed in question from his firm, and his (Rountree's) attention had been called to the matter by him, but that Mr. Rountree had acted entirely of his own volition in the matter, and that both he and Clerk Saville, in testing the matter, had rendered the public a service far-reaching in its results, and great in importance, not only to every court clerk in the Commonwealth, but to every man and woman who purchases property for every infant to whom a legacy has been left by deed of gift, and they deserved all credit for pushing the case to a speedy finality.

Virginia's Greedy System.
Mr. Brown was asked if he had made any investigation on the subject of this tax on deeds, and if so, would he object to giving results.
"Not at all," he replied, "and," said he, "The Times-Dispatch can do no greater service to a long suffering public than to lend its aid to rectifying a wrong that has so grievously existed in this iniquitous ad valorem tax on deeds. Thousands of dollars, he said, are exacted annually by the State from unsuspecting persons who record deeds for which they absolutely receive no adequate return. 'I am not referring,' he said, 'to the fee of a couple of dollars paid the clerk for transmitting the deed to record; this is a service for which they should be paid; but I am referring particularly to the ad valorem tax on the value of the property, which is charged in addition to the clerk's fee, and also the commissioner's fee for transferring the property from one name to another.'

"This unjust tax," he continued, "is not exacted on any other State from which I have as yet heard, and the State is not only bleeding its own children, but this unnecessary extortion is a detriment to many people to buying and selling here who will suffer under this tax matter, and in some cases is exaggerated, to our detriment."

"As instance of this, last fall a prominent and prosperous Western man with whom we had been corresponding for twelve months or more, to induce him to locate here, finally visited Richmond and purchased a \$10,000 farm for a relative. He was so well pleased with the property that before concluding the first purchase and went to the courthouse to record it. The clerk charged him the ad valorem tax, amounting to \$10,000, and the commissioner's fee, \$1. Attorney-General's new fee, \$1.10, making a total of \$12.10.
"While he was utterly astounded, the Western man paid the taxes and sought me for comfort, desiring to know if the clerk had made a mistake or had robbed him. On being informed that neither had happened, but that the clerk had conformed with the law as then enacted, and was correct, he replied that he never heard of such a thing in all his life, and the same deed in his native State (Michigan) would cost about \$2. He at once got cold feet on the \$60,000 deal and left for a hotter climate (Florida).
"The instance so impressed itself upon me that it was indirectly responsible, not only for the Rountree-

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